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THE INTERIM

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Legislative Consumer Committee

Robert Nelson Named Consumer Counsel

The Legislative Consumer Committee appointed Robert Nelson, chief counsel of the Public Service Commission, to the office of Consumer Counsel to succeed James Paine, who resigned to enter private practice in Portland, Ore. Nelson will begin his duties as Consumer Counsel on April 4.

Meeting Slated for April 15

The Legislative Consumer Committee will meet at 10 a.m. Friday, April 15, in Room 108 of the Capitol when the subject of shipper/receiver access to Helena will be discussed. Under consideration will be the Phosphate portion of the Burlington Northern line not included in the sale to Montana Rail Link.

Legislative Finance Committee

April 12, 13 Dates Chosen

The Legislative Finance Committee has tentatively scheduled its next meeting for Tuesday and Wednesday, April 12 and 13.

University Funding Study Committee

Actions on March 30

The University Funding Study Committee took action on March 30 to implement uniform personnel and class enrollment systems for the Montana University System. This action requires the units of the University System to extract personnel and class enrollment data from their individual data systems for electronic transfer to the state mainframe computer in Helena. The uniform and centralized information will then be accessible to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Office of Budget and Program Planning, and the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst.

The committee also reviewed methods of financing higher education, the financial relationship between the state and its higher education institutions, objectives to be considered when selecting a method for funding higher education, and a review of general budgeting methods. Examples were presented to demonstrate funding methods and incentives used by other states. This information will provide a framework for future reports reviewing higher education historic costs and peer information.

Registration of Electors for Montana's Primary Election Closes 5 p.m., Monday, May 9

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Montana Legislative Council

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Joint Interim Subcommittee on Welfare

April 15 Is Date for Next Meeting

The Joint Interim Subcommittee on Welfare will meet at 8:30 a.m., Friday, April 15, in Room 104 of the Capitol.

The tentative agenda includes presentation of:

- a report on the rising public assistance caseloads and the increased costs of welfare in Montana;
- an auditor's report concerning administration of the AFDC and General Assistance Programs;
- a report on the performance of the state General Assistance work program;
- a research report on current state work program options;
- a legal memorandum on the status of Montana welfare law; and
- a report discussing the legal significance of Constitutional Amendment No. 18 in allowing the Legislature greater discretion to determine eligibility and benefit standards for Montana welfare programs.

Committee on Indian Affairs

Reports Heard March 26

The Committee on Indian Affairs, at its second meeting of this interim on March 26, received a preliminary report of the Western Governors' Association study on western state-tribal relations and heard a report from Leslie Taylor of the Department of Family Services on state-tribal agreements for child protective services. The Committee also discussed a proposal from the Montana Reservation Counties Association to create a position in state government for reservation counties similar to the present position of Coordinator of Indian Affairs.

Committee Actions

The Committee:

- voted to request U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye's subcommittee to hold a hearing in Montana on the new Indian Health Service regulations;
- voted to send a letter to the Board of Regents regarding the effect of their proposed admission standards on Native American students seeking entrance to the Montana university system;
- asked staff to continue working on the study of Native American students in post-secondary education;
- voted to ask the Basic Education Subcommittee to keep the Indian Affairs Committee informed about decisions regarding the use of P.L. 874 funds in any new school funding formulas; and
- asked staff to continue work on the cross-deputization bill requested by the Attorney General's office in conjunction with the Coordinator of Indian Affairs.

Third Meeting Set June 25

The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 25.

Joint Interim Subcommittee on Basic Education

April 30 Is Meeting Date

Saturday, April 30, is the tentative date for the second meeting of the Joint Interim Subcommittee on Basic Education. The main activity will be a review of the Board of Public Education's Project Excellence accreditation standards process and recommendations. Other topics will be the progress of the school funding lawsuit and review of any reports of the K-12 Education Subcommittee of the Legislative Finance Committee.

Environmental Quality Council

Forest Practices/Watershed Study Update

The Environmental Quality Council will meet at 9 a.m. Friday, April 8, in Room 108 of the Capitol. The meeting will begin with updates on the HJR 49 Forest Practices/Watershed study.

MEPA Applications

Representatives of the Department of Agriculture will discuss their response to a recent Attorney General's opinion on the applicability of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to the emergency grasshopper spraying program.

Two other items concerning implementation of MEPA will follow: a progress report on the administration's continuation of the effort to revise MEPA rules and a proposal by the Natural Resource Information System to index the environmental documents of state agencies.

Hazardous Waste Law Review

The EQC will then review the status of the major hazardous waste legislation passed by the 1987 Legislature, including management of small-quantity hazardous wastes, the Superfund account, the mini-Superfund program, and the legal efforts to recover damages for the effects of hazardous wastes on state natural resources.

Report on Subdivision Study

The afternoon session will focus on the EQC subdivision study, with a report on the areas of consensus and differences resulting from recent subcommittee deliberations on draft legislative proposals.

Water Policy Committee

Meeting Planned in Late May

The Water Policy Committee will meet in late May to discuss water data management, water transfers, and other topics. The agenda will include an update from Saunders, Snyder, Ross and Dickson, P.C., on its study of the water rights adjudication process.

Coal Tax Oversight Subcommittee

Colstrip Area Tour Planned

The Coal Tax Oversight Subcommittee will visit coal mines, power plants, and proposed facilities in the Colstrip area next month.

The tour will begin at 8 a.m. Thursday, April 14, with a visit to Peabody Coal Company's Big Sky Mine, where the Subcommittee members will also see a demonstration and explanation of the water monitoring project by the Montana Bureau of Mines.

The afternoon of April 14 will be occupied by a tour of Westmoreland Resources' Absaloka Mine.

Public Meeting Scheduled

The Subcommittee will conduct a public meeting at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, April 14, in the auditorium of the Frank Brattin Middle School in Colstrip.

On Friday, April 15, the activities will begin with a visit to the site of Montana One Partners' proposed cogeneration project for an explanation of the processes involved in the project.

Power Plants On Itinerary

The remainder of that day will be occupied by a tour of Western Energy Company's Rosebud Mine and a visit to the Colstrip power plants.

The purpose of the tour, the first visit of the Subcommittee to Colstrip in four years, is to acquaint the members with the problems and prospects of the coal industry.

Revenue Oversight Committee

Meeting Scheduled April 8

Comments from the Department of Revenue on the procedures of property reappraisal and reports from the Committee staff on the progress of the effort to resolve the issues posed by the beneficial use tax and protested taxes and the compilation of sales tax data base will be heard by the Revenue Oversight Committee at its meeting Friday, April 8, in Room 104 of the Capitol. Another topic for discussion will be the explanation of the Committee's authority on rules of the Department of Revenue with clarification of the ambiguities between the powers of the Administrative Code Committee and the Revenue Oversight Committee.

Legislative Council

Three Bill Drafts Considered

At its meeting on March 18, the Legislative Council considered three bills drafted in response to authorization and:

- unanimously approved preparation of a final draft of a bill revising session law formats to give each act a chapter number and to show as stricken any material deleted from existing law;
- delayed consideration of a bill establishing a deadline for return of a post-session veto poll until information regarding the ability of the Legislature to convene in special session to override a veto had been presented to the Council;
- approved final drafting of a proposed constitutional amendment to provide the governor with 14 days to sign or veto a bill regardless of when it is delivered to him. An additional section concerning post-session amendatory veto power was not approved for the final draft;
- discussed revised Council Rules of Procedure and recommended changes and additions for a final draft to be presented at the next meeting;

- approved payment of registration fee for John MacMaster at the NCSL annual meeting;
- approved replacement of the accounting technician position recently vacated by Lynne Hamilton at half time and full time for session duties;
- adjusted the budget allocations to the Joint Interim Subcommittees on Welfare and Basic Education to allow for one additional meeting each (the reallocation to the Welfare Subcommittee is $1,950; the reallocation to Basic Education is $2,000);
- declined to designate a legislative committee to study the medical liability issue because the governor has commissioned a study but directed staff to contact the commission and offer Council staff assistance in drafting and to list a number of concerns the Council thought should be addressed by such a study;
- instructed staff to prepare a response to the Revenue Oversight Committee concerning the education study, an issue that the Council believes is covered and believes that another committee would be duplicative; and
- approved provision of accounting services to the Legislative Reorganization and Improvement Commission.

Meeting Set for April 29

The Council set its next meeting for April 29 and carried over the following agenda items:

- approval of director job descriptions;
- review of Council goals and objectives statement; and
- discussion of structured interview model.

Also set for the April 29 meeting was a review of the final draft of rules of procedure.

Librarians Find Montana Makes News

A recent search on the NEWSEARCH Database revealed 10 articles about Montana and Montanans' activities during 1988 in such publications as the New York Times, Chemical & Engineering News, MS. Magazine, Sail, and American West as well the Kyodo's Japan Economic Newswire, PR Newswire, and Reuters Financial Wire.

Topics included insurance equity, land use controversies around Yellowstone Park, elm tree microbes, the Izaak Walton Inn at Essex, Japanese-Montana company contract, and the North American ski-yachting championships.

The Legislative Council Library has access to more than 300 databases. Call the library at 444-3064 with your information requests. A database search may provide the information you need.

Initiatives Received

- Liability limitations (CI-30 repeat)
- Litter control and recycling (bottle bill) - withdrawn
- Return property tax assessment and appraisal to counties III
- Sunset of executive and legislative branch agencies
- Lobbying limits
- Jury to determine law and facts
- Litter control and recycling (bottle bill II)

To date the Legal Division has reviewed 41 separate ballot issue submissions. Two of the early submissions were for referendums that were not received within six months of the adjournment of the Legislature and did not comply with the constitutional time limits for processing referendum petitions. Eight issues have been withdrawn or abandoned. Of the remaining 31 issues that are either being circulated for signature-gathering or are completing the review process, 24 are constitutional amendments. A listing of all ballot issues received for review is available from the Legislative Council. The text of a proposed issue along with the staff's review and the sponsor's response is available from the secretary of state's office.

Annotations

The first of four mailings of the annotations to the 1987 MCA was scheduled to be shipped from the printer, Advanced Litho Printing of Great Falls, on March 31. The preparation of the annotations to the MCA is one of the primary responsibilities of the Legal Division for the interim after the codification process has been completed.

House Legislative Administration Committee

Technical Improvements Near Realization

Plans are being finalized for the installation during the summer of new agenda boards and bill status boards and for modification of the electronic voting system in the House of Representatives.

Under the direction and supervision of the House Legislative Administration Committee, the project continues the work started in 1984 and will provide both a more complete, flexible, and automatic system and a more integrated system that will have an ability to display both text and numbers that will be generated by a computer terminal on the rostrum. A new printer in the chief clerk's office will provide vote print-outs.

House staff members have worked in close cooperation with the staff of the Legislative Council's Legislative Services Division to develop the plans. This coordinated effort will also result in a new feature on the Council's bill status system--the following day's House agenda will be available each night to subscribers of the computer system and on the public terminals in the Capitol.

Legislative Reorganization and Improvement Commission

Second Meeting Held

The Legislative Reorganization and Improvement Commission (LRIC), during its second meeting on March 19, discussed the hiring of a director, donations received and the budget, and the direction of the LRIC's study and activities over the next eight months.

After discussing several options for the hiring of a director, the LRIC decided to employ a person to work with the Commission on a day-to-day basis and reserved its option to retain a consultant for special projects. Applicants for the director's position will be interviewed on April 8.

Donations to the LRIC on March 18 totalled over $7,000. It was estimated that another $7,000 to $8,000 in private and corporate contributions is likely. The LRIC estimates that its total budget for the project will be in the range of $30,000.

Bill Draft Limit Is Top Priority

The LRIC agreed that limiting the number of bill draft requests during legislative sessions is its top priority. Other issues to be discussed include reconciliation of revenues and expenditures, deadlines, powers of committees and leadership, other matters of legislative operations, and the organization of the legislative branch agencies.

Meeting Scheduled April 8

The third meeting of the Commission is set for 9 a.m. Friday, April 8, in Room 312-D of the Capitol. Interviews of applicants for the directorship will begin at 1:30 p.m.

Contributors to LRIC

Through March 29, the Legislative Reorganization and Improvement Commission had received contributions totaling $8,800 from:

Montana Retail Association, Cominco American, Selover Buick, Inc., Montana Tunnels Mining, Inc., Montana Independent Bankers, NERCO Coal Corp., Montana Coal Council, Montana Chamber of Commerce, Columbia Falls Aluminum Co., Montana Cable TV, Mountain Bell, Montana Power Co., Portland General Electric, Montana Wool Growers Association, Montana Association of Realtors, American Asphalt, Inc., Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association, Luxan & Murfitt, Homestake Mining Co., Montana Bankers Association, WETA-Montana, Galusha, Higgins, & Galusha, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Bitterroot Valley Bank, Pacific Power & Light Co.

Senate Legislative Administration Committee

Meeting Scheduled April 8

The Senate Legislative Administration Committee will meet Friday, April 8, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Room 413 of the Capitol.

Western Legislative Conference

Meeting in Coeur d'Alene Aug. 21-24

Legislators are receiving with this issue of The Interim an information brochure describing plans for the 1988 Western Legislative Conference at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Check for details of the activities and program features of the Aug. 21-24 meeting.

April

All Meetings Subject to Change!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Easter †	4	5	6	7	8 ROC, Rm. 104 EQC, Rm. 108 LRIC, Rm. 312-D Sen. Leg. Admin Comm., Rm. 413	9
10	11	12 Legislative Finance Committee Rm. 104 ----------Tentative----------	13	14 ----Coal Tax Oversight, Colstrip-----	15 Cons. Counsel, Rm. 104 Subcomm. on Welfare, Rm. 104	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 Legislative Council Rm. 104	30 Subcommittee on Basic Education ----Tentative----

May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Mother's Day ♥	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 Revenue Oversight Commit'ee Rm. 104	21
22	23	24	25	26 EQC Water Policy Rm. 104	27	28
29	30 Memorial Day	31				

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